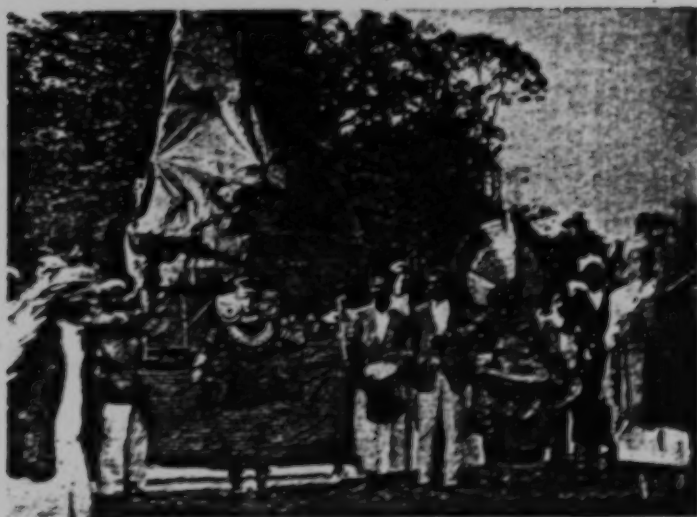




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A Coorg Temple (Kaymade)



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A Ghost Mask (Karnakole)

[facing p. 51]

by the junction of the four inner slopes of the roof, the dripping rain-water from which is collected in a masonry reservoir and drained off in an underground channel. On the side opposite to the verandah two doors communicate with the backyard of the house.

The front of the verandah is raised, and covered with a 2 feet broad wooden slab, so as to form a convenient seat; from it rise 3 or 4 wooden pillars, square and tapering and sometimes carved; the floor is of well beaten mud overlaid with cowdung; and the ceiling of wood arranged in small compartments. In some houses the verandah is separated from the inner hall merely by a wooden grating, in others by a solid earthwall with a sort of window, or lattice, made of wood. Like the principal door posts this aperture is often very handsomely carved in flowers and figures leaving small open spaces between, just enough to peep through without being seen, a contrivance chiefly for the benefit of the fair Kodagitis, who are as curious to see and observe visitors as their Mussulman sisters behind the Purdah or screen.

Entering through the principal door, the first compartment to the right is occupied by the master of the house and his wife. The next room is the kitchen from which the smoke issues and fills the whole house, coating and preserving the wood-work. While the European rubs his eyes and gasps for fresh air, the inmates of the house feel no inconvenience and only smile at his sensitiveness. The small compartments of the remaining two wings are tenanted by the married couples, and the unmarried women; the boys and young men sleep in the hall. From the ceiling are suspended matchlocks and rifles, the wooden bells and trappings for their pack-bullocks, and other domestic utensils, and the space under the roof, which is reached by a ladder, serves for storing bags, baskets, pads, pots, onions, salt, etc.

The house and yard are generally kept clean and orderly, 000

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527 On the following morn-
 224 ing the youths assemble for a hunt in the forest, belonging to the village. Whatever game is brought down, is divided by the huntmen in the following manner: the man who has killed the animal, receives a hind-quarter and the head, the rest belongs to the company. This day is followed by a great hunt of the whole Nádu, a repetition of the village-hunt, on a larger scale. The Keilmárta, to the taste of young Coorg, is the most glorious of all the festivals.

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5. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND POPULAR SUPERSTITION.

The previous description of familiar and popular Coorg life would be incomplete without an account of other *religious observances*, if such a name may be given to the lowest degree of superstitions, which take the place of the worship of God among this rude race.

a. The sanctuaries of a Coorg community.

Instead of a general description, a short sketch of the village "Arméri" in Beppunád, the centre of Coorg life, may serve as a specimen.

778 Arméri numbers only 25 Coorg houses, but is richly pro-
 177 vided with idol shrines. First a Bhagavati temple in charge of Brahmans. In connection with this kind of worship there is a Mahádéva temple, and two Lingas in the jungle, which receive regular púja. Also two sanctuaries of Ayappa (the Shani, Saturn Pán? of Hindu mythology) have Brahmans for priests. Ayappa (Lord) is quite naturalized among the Coorgs. [776] He is the great forest-god, a mighty hunter, to whom models [532] in clay of dogs, horses and tigers are offered in abundance. [793] In these observances the whole community joins under the [182] superintendence of Brahmans. There are besides six places in which Chámundi or Raktéshvari (names for Párvati, Shiva's

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[312] On the north side, a little below the temple, there is a small tank with perennial water, which is considered holy, but 100 years ago it is said to have been defiled by a Chándála woman bathing in it, when the spring ceased to flow for some time.

825] On the south-east ridge a cave is shown which, according to Brahminical discovery, offered an asylum to the exiled Pándus! After their departure the cave was occupied by a tiger, which with due respect for the játre quits his abode 7 days before the feast and afterwards returns.

On the precipitous side of the rock there are nests of vultures and several hundreds of beehives.

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788 For seven days before the Tulásankramana in the village Mugntagéri at the foot of the hill, the ryots assemble one from each house at the Mandu and sing Coorg chants in praise of Isvara. On the night of the 7th the inhabitants of the whole nād come together, disguising themselves in masks of 18 various descriptions, they then go to the Ambala and dance and sing to the sound of the tomtom. The day following a light hollow frame, representing a horse, made of cane-work, is decked out so as to hide the lower part of the man's body who carries it, making it appear as if he rode the horse. The multitude then ascend the hill in procession, headed by the horse and a band of musicians, dance round the temple and bring their offerings of water, fruit and money.

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[778] The Pálár játre in Kuyingherinád in honor of Páládrappa, brother of Iggudappa, is a similar affair, which takes place in the month of April. The temple was rebuilt only a few years ago at a considerable expense and chiefly by the exertions of a Coorg official whose zeal and devotion one could wish had been employed in a better cause, especially in the education of his ignorant and superstitious nād people!

Amongst the játres beyond this country those visited by the Coorgs are four: *Subramanya* on the northern frontier of Coorg, which, in December, attracts a great number of people,

by Virājender Vodeyar in 1821. By their side is a smaller tomb over the remains of an honored Guru of the Rajas, Rudrappa, which was built by Devan Ponappa in 1834. The Mausoleums are situated at the northern extremity of the Mercara Petta (Mahadévapet) and enclosed by a high embankment. They are square buildings much in the style of Mahomedan edifices, with a handsome dome in the centre and four minaret-like turrets at the corners surmounted by Basavas. On the top of the dome is a gilded ball with a weathercock above it, and all the window frames are of handsomely sculptured sienite blocks with solid brass bars. A flight of stone steps, flanked on the top by 2 well carved pillars with representations of Siva, leads to an open platform all round the building. The inside consists of a covered verandah round one centre room in which two slightly raised slabs in the shape of a cross covered over with white cloth and daily renewed flowers indicate the sepulchres. A lamp burns continually and a Lingaite Pūjāri is in daily attendance upon the deified Dodda-Virājender.

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In Mādapūr or Jambūr 10 miles north-east of Mercara, there is the ancient cemetery of the Coorg Rajas' family. It is prettily situated on the banks of the Mādapūr river, but has no claim to architectural merit. The building is surrounded by narrow out-houses which crowd too closely upon it. It is about 40 feet square and nearly the same height and stands on an elevated base. It consists of two stories, the bottom one inclosing the sepulchres in a central apartment; the one above is of the same size as the central apartment, leaving room for a passage and a low balustrade all round. The lower story is ornamented with a large figure of a Basava sculptured in sienite and similar images adorn the capital of four small pillars placed at the angles on the top of the building.

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Near the Kāvéri, at Holesdihalli there is the tomb of

Monumental Stones of a more recent date are the Kollu-kallu (from kollu, to kill—and kallu, stone) tombstones in honour of warriors slain in battle. They are found along the eastern districts of Coorg. One I saw in Tavalagheri-grāma in Kiggatnād, some in Kottecād, 6 miles to the east of Mercara, and many in Fraserpet and near the Sómawarpet; the same kind of monuments occur also frequently in the Mysore country, especially in Nuggur and as far north as Belgaum. In all these localities the stones show a similar character. A large collection of them may be seen in the town of Mysore in an open place opposite the Grave-yard. The slabs are of granite, with rough facings, about 6 feet high, 4 feet broad and 9 inches thick, and frequently the lower half is buried in the ground. The front side is generally divided into three compartments, each containing some figures in relief, the background being chiselled out, so that the figures are level with the frame of the compartments. The objects represented in the top frame are one, two or three central figures seated in various postures on low stools such as the Hindus still use, and two female figures standing by their sides with fans. The central figures are evidently the heroes, they sit sword in hand with consequential dignity. The second compartment is filled with a string of 3, 5 or 7 figures alternately males and females, the latter preponderating and in most lively attitudes, the male figures extending their arms and resting their hands on the shoulders of the females who support their partners' arms near the elbows. The extreme figures who are always females hold fans (or guitars?) in their hands. The third frame encloses a battle scene in which warriors on foot and armed with bows and arrows, swords and shields are engaged in combat, one man lying dead on the ground. In the right corner there is a warrior on horseback with sword in hand making gestures of command or encouragement and in the left corner one or two bulls are represented. The

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172 figures are in grotesque attitudes, but remarkably well grouped and closely resemble the sculptured reliefs of Halibeed.

In the top compartment there is occasionally a lamp and a Linga both on pedestals, and these insignia, together with the Basavas in the third frame, evidently denote the heroes as Linga worshippers and aliens from the present Coorgs, who know nothing about them; the Canarese Gaudas, in whose countries they are chiefly found, claim them as relics of their ancestors and annually present before these stones offerings of cakes and fruit. The dresses of all the figures represented are not in the Coorg but in the costume of Hindus of the scantiest clothing. Col. Wilks in his *History of Mysore* Vol. I. p. 15. explains the sculptured representations in the (1795) three compartments thus: "The lowest describes the battle in which the hero was slain; the centre compartment represents him in the act of being conveyed to heaven between two celestial nymphs: in the uppermost he has arrived at the regions of bliss and is delineated as seated before the peculiar emblem of his religion—generally the lingam—for the practice of erecting monuments seems chiefly to belong to the sect of Siva."

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766 In north and north-east Coorg similar stones, but with simple and coarse sculptural figures are still erected by relations of influential men who met with a violent death or were carried away by small-pox and cholera.

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769 With the Coorgs it is the custom, to keep images of men and women in Coorg costume chased in silver-plates in the *Keimatta*, which is a small square building near the house, in remembrance of their ancestors whose departed spirits are there annually worshipped. These plates which are of little artistic merit are made by the country goldsmiths. Near the (326) *Kannana House*, on that fine hill slope opposite the Central (1795) School in Mercara, there is a stone-slab with a picture in (7648) relief of a Coorg warrior. The stone is erected in the paddy